The Unitarian Christian

Vol. 11 MAY, 1956 No. 4

LIBRARY
STARR KING SCHOOL
NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM BUILDING

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN — Contributed

IF JESUS HAD WRITTEN A BOOK — Carl Bihldorff

A MINORITY WE CRUSHED — Sidney S. Robins

JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT — Editors

THE DISCIPLINE OF LIBERTY — Charles C. Forman

THE STUDENT UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

PRAYER

SEVENTY YEARS AGO

HERETIC, REBEL, THING TO FLOUT — Book Review

31458

EDITORIAL

Socrates told his jury that he had never found a man who knew what he was doing. What did he mean by "knowing what he was doing"? Probably much the same thing that Dr. Jung means by his phrase "the modern man." The modern man is the conscious man; the man who can hold within his comprehension all the forces, past and present, practical and spiritual, subjective and objective which have co-operated to make him what he is at the present moment. We are probably right in saying that to know what we are doing is to be a conscious man.

There is a real significance in calling the conscious man a modern man. Socrates could hardly wonder that the man who knew what he was doing was such a rarity in that distant day. He lacked the means of knowing. He was living in ignorance of world affairs and conditions, of what was going on in other countries, even in other cities outside of Athens. One hundred and eighty years ago, when the Declaration of Independence was drawn up, signed, duly engrossed, and despatched to His Majesty King George the Third, how many of our forefathers who signed it knew what they were doing? With the possible exception of Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, they were all taking a desperate jump in the dark. The fact that they landed safely on their feet is due to no conscious foresight, but to the mere chance that they happened to possess the very qualities of character that are always the uncompromising requisites for a successful democracy: Intelligence (as well informed as is possible), Moral Reliability, and Steadfast Determination. The last two, aided and abetted by a rather astonishing amount of good fortune, made up in large part for their lack of the first. They were intelligent enough but not too well informed.

Looking back from this perspective of one hundred and eighty years we can see that it was largely by anticipation that they knew what they were doing. But today there is no likelihood of a repetition of that happy chance. Therefore there is no escape from the responsibility confronting us. We may safely assume that most of us would greatly prefer to have our experiment in self-government prove itself a success; for it is still on trial, and still dependent as ever on its three requisites. If it proves to be a failure it will be entirely our own fault. We are modern men, and conscious men. And if we do not know what we are doing we must be both blind and deaf. The morning press, the radio and the television are blaring their information into our intelligence every day from dawn to midnight. We need neither toil nor search; but only give attention for no more than five minutes a day, and, behold, King Solomon with all his wisdom would not be so well-informed as one of these. That disposes of the first requisite.

As for the second requisite, Moral Reliability, we may dispose of that as we see fit. Many will say that all the country needs is the irreducible minimum of Moral Reliability; and the Lord knows there is plenty of that in our country. Think of the thousands of Bible Christians in the south, the Dunkers and Amish men of Pennsylvania, the Puritans of New England. We are safely above the minimum. But think also of Charles Bennett's "hard business man. One cannot call him deliberately selfish, but he is selfish in the sense that the claims of others simply do not exist for him. You see a mixture of unscrupulousness and cruelty. He is cruel not with the ferocity of the tiger, but with the dull insensibility of the cartwheel." There are plenty of him also. That requisite needs some attention. The same is true of the third requisite, Steadfast Determination. If we are not determined to have our democracy no one is going to force it upon us. We can have it if we pay the price in upright generous character, in reverence and self-control. And no one can take it from us. What we need is a higher standard of American citizenship.

C. E. P.

THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN is published four times a year in October, December, March and May, by the Unitarian Christian Fellowship. (Dr. Amos B. Horlacher, *President;* Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman, *Vice President;* Miss Katherine V. Parker, *Recording Secretary;* Mr. Ralph Lazzaro, *Corresponding Secretary.*)

Editorial Board: Rev. Charles E. Park, D. D., Chairman. Rev. Carl Bihldorff, Rev. Carl A. Seaward, Rev. Henry Hallam Saunderson, D. D., Mrs. Herbert Lyman and Constant Wendell.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $1.00 a year payable to Treasurer, Constant Wendell, Unitarian Christian Publication Office, 102 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Entered as second class matter at Boston Post Office, Oct. 25, 1954.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

To some good Christians the Gospel of John is the outstanding gem of the New Testament. To those of us who have been brought up on the Synoptic Gospels, and even as children have built up in our hearts a strong and lasting love for their forth-right honesty of language, their unmistakable warmth of feeling, their vivid human touches, and most of all for their lovable hero who calls himself the Son of Man, and whose presence seems to hallow every page, the Gospel of John is a bewildering puzzle that awakens regret, even indignation.

Professor George Herbert Palmer once said at a public meeting, "I never read the Gospel of John if I can help it." When asked why, he replied, "Because it takes away my Jesus, and offers me in his place a cold, bloodless, unreal creature whom I can't love, don't love, and don't want to love."

That is pretty strong language and betokens pretty strong feeling. But it expresses exactly the reason why some people feel such an aversion to the Gospel of John. No one can read Matthew, Mark, or Luke without speedily forming a distinct mental picture of Jesus of Nazareth: his obvious love for mankind, his sympathy and eagerness to help, his blazing wrath over all forms of injustice or oppression, his spiritual loneliness so far as an understanding human companionship goes, the depth and power of his love for his Father in Heaven, his fondness for parables, his whimsicalities and occasional stabs of sarcasm, his rich imagery in speech, and his emotional variety and vivacity.

Here is a real man, and a very rare man, whose mere presence is a defiance to Satan. To read about him is to feel the challenge to overhaul your inner self, and drag out of their hiding-places the half-forgotten nobilities of your own nature and be, at least for the moment, at your best. Our mental picture of this Jesus depicts him as a personality of irresistible charm, and the better we know him the more irresistible that charm becomes. We love him spontaneously, we cannot help ourselves.

If this be so, millions will agree that it is, then to finish the last chapter of Luke, turn the page, and begin the first chapter of John is to undergo a revulsion of feeling that is both bewildering and painful. "It takes away my Jesus" puts it mildly. What does it give us instead? What possible correspondence can we find between "my Jesus" and this amorphous egotistical being who gives no evidence of human interest or human feeling? It cannot be denied that the man who has learned to know and love the Jesus of the Synoptics is sharply disappointed at his first introduction to "the Word made Flesh" of the Fourth Gospel. Who then is responsible for this disappointment? Who wrote the Gospel of John? and when? and why?

We do not know, probably never shall know who wrote it. We can make a reasonable surmise as to the date of its writing. Evidently the author had at hand all three of the Synoptic Gospels. He also had at hand a generous amount of accurate knowledge of the Jews, their religion, their sacred literature, their various feasts and how they were observed, and of their daily manners and habits of thought and behavior. He even knew the staple diet of the poor people of Galilee—barley bread, and little smoked or pickled fishes such as Peter and Andrew caught in the Sea of Galilee. He knew all about the Pool of Bethesda: its five porches, and the charming fable about the angel who occasionally disturbed the surface of the pool, and then cured the first sufferer who stepped into the water thereafter. Also he professes to know many of the trivial facts that attended the trial and crucifixion of Jesus: it was Peter who drew his sword and struck off the ear of the High Priest's servant. The man's name was Malchus. It was a kinsman of Malchus who occasioned Peter's third denial of Jesus, claiming he had seen Peter in the Garden with Jesus.

Since most of these corroborative details are wholly without significance, we may suspect that the author is drawing upon his imagination for them, and writes them down "merely to lend artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." But he has us at a disadvantage; we can bring no definite charge against him. But this abundance of detail is so characteristic of the entire Gospel that we may surmise that the date of authorship must have been late enough to give time for the alleged facts to accumulate, and for him to learn them. The date generally accepted is about 125 A. D.

The third question: Why was the Fourth Gospel written? provokes a much more respectable surmise. Evidently the author had acquainted himself with the religion that Jesus had taught, and had found little if any satisfaction in it. If he had approved it he would have carried it on in his own fashion. This is just what he does not do. The way he ignores Jesus and his teachings and his example is nothing short of scandalous. The most painfully conspicuous feature in the Gospel is the omissions. There is no Temptation in the wilderness; no Sermon on the Mount; no Beatitudes or Lord's

Prayer; no scene at Caesarea Philippi; no Transfiguration; no parables; no Blessing little children; no Cleansing the Temple; no Agony in the Garden; no Sinking under the Cross; no sign of bodily suffering; no Cry of despair—My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? and no prayer of forgiveness—Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

These omissions prove to our satisfaction that the author had no desire to carry on the teachings of Jesus. What he did want was to take advantage of the head-start which that religion of Jesus had already made, and turn its enthusiasms to the best possible advantage. That best possible advantage could never be secured by attempting to carry on the work of Jesus, but it might be secured by carrying on the work of Paul, by taking up his labor where he had left off and pushing it on to extremes that Paul himself would never have approved. This is not to imply that Paul was a greater man than Jesus. He was not; but he knew a great deal more about the world than Jesus did, and a great deal more about people outside of Palestine, how they felt and thought. For whereas Jesus was a native-born Palestinian Jew whose world was entirely included within a radius of sixty-five miles from Capernaum, and whose contacts with Gentiles were infrequent—like the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the Roman centurion at Capernaum, Paul was a thoroughgoing cosmopolitan, a Jew of the Dispersion, born in Tarsus, speaking Greek, and having daily dealings with far more Greeks, Romans, Alexandrians, Syrians, Persians, dwellers in Mesopotamia, and miscellaneous gentiles than with Jews.

It was for Jesus, pondering the problem of life in his quiet seclusion, to perfect his sublime message to his people. Somewhat as follows: the true covenant between God and His people is not a covenant of mutual expediency; it is a covenant of love. So long as your life rests upon a basic incentive of duty and fear your service to God will be grudging, resentful and calculated. The moment you learn to love God with all your might, and His gift of life, and your fellow-men who share the gift with you—the moment you learn to think of Him as your Father in Heaven, and yourself as His son, and so shift your life off that old sordid basic incentive of duty and fear, and place it squarely on this new basic incentive of love, that moment your grudging, resentful spirit will vanish; you will find yourself doing His will eagerly, spontaneously; you will know what God wants of you before the Law can tell you; you will give it before you are asked; and a great deal more that the Law dares to ask; and you will find your reward in the discovery that you are God's beloved son, in whom He is well pleased.

It was for Paul to recognize that message just as we do, just as human hearts always must and will recognize it: absolute truth. And to resolve that it must be given, not to the Jews only, but to the whole world.

Most of all, it is for us to see that Paul had but one way in which he could present this message to the world of his time: he must somehow adapt it to the type of religion then in demand. With our perspective of time and distance we should have no difficulty in understanding Paul's procedure. A mere passing acquaintance with the fascinating subject of Comparative Religions is enough to show us that every religion has a fairly definite purpose or objective: to satisfy the needs of its people, make good their deficiencies, and supply the best answer possible for the problems they are facing. Since man's needs and problems are constantly changing as the conditions of his life change, the definite objectives of religion have to change to keep abreast with him, and avoid obsolescence.

Thus it comes to pass that religion always breaks down into a sequence of types, each type designed to meet the needs and problems that are foremost in that age and state of culture. At an early state of culture man's most pressing need is for some sort of understanding of his world, to help him co-ordinate himself to the elemental facts of his experience. Religion comes forward with its fantastic cosmogonies purporting to explain the creation of the world, the procession of the equinoxes, the changing seasons, and the behavior of the sun. There we have religion of the mythological type.

When man reached the animistic stage in his culture, and believed that every material object animate or inanimate had its spirit, and that plenty of homeless spirits were roaming around seeking a material body to inhabit, and that he was surrounded by these spirits, some benign, most of them malignant, his foremost emotion was one of fear; and his foremost need was the ability to deal successfully with this host of spirits; placate the good, exorcise the evil. At once religion came forward with its charms, incantations, orgies, and exorcisms. Thus we have religion of the protective type.

When man began to think ethnically, and became aware of the strong bonds of consanguinity, a process of segregation set in, which was the first step in the development of nationalism. Birds of an ethnic feather began to flock together. Each ethnic group had its own tradition, ancestry, language, and tribal God. We have here religion of the monolatry type. Since the fortunes of the tribe were largely dependent upon the prowess of its god in his dealings with other

ethnic gods, it became inevitable that this period was marked by tribal jealousies and wars. Religion of the monolatry type was pretty sure to be also religion of the militant type. It is at this point that the Prophet Zephaniah fits in: Jehovah "will famish all the gods of the earth," and make himself supreme among all ethnic gods —King of kings; Lord of lords.

In the age of the great conquering despots, society began to be divided up into a rigid system of classes, the Ruler and his nobles at the top; the humblest laborers at the bottom. All the good things of life were for the upper classes; for the lower classes there was nothing but want, privation and misery. There was no hope of man's ever being able to improve his lot. He must find some way of escaping these tribulations. So we have one of the most persistent of religious types: the Escapist-Redemptionist type. Religion came forward with several such ways of escape. Man could learn to suppress all desire for the better things of this life, and make up for lost time when he reached heaven. He could train himself to think that his hardships were not so bad as he thought they were, like the Epicureans; he could cultivate a taste for the simplest kind of simple living, like Diogenes and his Cynics, and the "dog's life," he could play his personal role as bravely and faithfully as possible and earn a rugged self-respect, and bid angry defiance to all circumstance, like the Stoics; he could get himself initiated into the fellowship of some triumphant Hero-god, who would share his personal victory with his followers, like any one of the dozens of mystery cults; or he could join one of the several Gnostic cults, and put himself in line to receive the Gnosis, or secret of salvation which would be his pass-port to heaven. Then there was the last and hardest way to escape tribulation and earn heavenly bliss—simple old-fashioned endurance, grit your teeth, shut your eyes, hang on, till death brings release and leads you into the fairer life that awaits you. He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

This Escapist-Redemptionist type of religion was very much in vogue during New Testament times. Apparently it was about as peremtory as the fashion in hats for women. No religion that failed to conform could hope to be so much as recognized as a religion. But Jesus gave the world a religion that utterly failed to conform. It taught that God had made this world, and it was a good world. If it contained tribulation which must be escaped, it was man's fault. It taught that man must understand himself as son of God; respect himself; discover his latent nobilities; cultivate himself in character; and earn his own salvation. God believed in him, and was waiting with infinite patience, forgiveness, and readiness to help. He could have all the time he needed. He could make this world the place it should be, and in doing this he would qualify himself for heaven.

This appealed powerfully to Paul. We like to think that if he could have had his way he would have pushed this religion of Jesus into the public attention and insisted on its truth and acceptability by all sorts and conditions of men—a refreshing novelty, a clean break with the past. But what was he to do with a religion that started with such a contradictory set of presuppositions, that recommended such unconventional methods and objectives, and that accentuated its nonconformity to the prevailing type by making not the slightest requisition on super-human agencies —no magic, no mystery, no appeal to the Divine Intervention, no occult initiation or cabalistic rites, no abracadabra or hocus pocus or mumbo jumbo; only a simplicity that St. Augustine immortalized several centuries later, by his definition of Christianity: Love God, and do what you like.

That might have been all right for St. Augustine, but it surely would not work for Paul. We hope and believe that it went against the grain, but Paul felt he had no choice. To give the religion of Jesus its necessary appeal he must dress it out with some of the features of a Mystery Cult. He saw his opportunity. Where could he find a more perfect Hero-God than Jesus! He was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day he rose from the dead. He was no mere mythological figure, but a living, breathing, well-remembered man of singular power and grace. We know well enough what an astonishing success Paul secured. He gave the world a new Mystery Cult that out-stripped all rivals and became so powerful that it won the accolade of official persecution.

It was this success that caught the attention of the Gnostics. They were trying to do among the educated classes much the same thing that Paul was doing so successfully among laborers, slaves, and legionaries. Naturally, they felt it was far more worth their while to carry on the work of Paul than to attempt the hopeless task of carrying on the work of Jesus, for which the world was not yet ready. And they too saw their opportunity.

At the apex of the Gnostic System there was the Eternal God, Spirit of absolute wisdom, power, and holiness, the ever-burning Pleroma, Fulness of Life and Light, forever giving off His emanations, waves of life and light, but remaining Himself unexhausted. These emanations, syzygies, float down through space until, under the direction of a demi-urge, they are gath-

ered and organized into a world. A series of worlds is thus created in a descending scale, each a little less spiritual and more materialistic in substance as the distance from God increases. In one system there were three hundred and sixty-five worlds, the lowest and most materialistic of which was this earth on which we live, created by the demi-urge Jehovah.

These intermediary worlds were a sort of ladder to be climbed by souls inhabiting them, until at last those souls were pure enough for God's own heaven. But our earth was so far from God that even His divine magnetism was felt only as a feeble pull, and that only by the most spiritually competent of our inhabitants.

Here was a spot into which Jesus could be inserted. God sent His greatest Aeon, His Word, whose seat was at God's right hand, to be incarnated in the body of Jesus, and to dwell for a few months among men, full of grace and truth, teaching them as much as they could endure, and gathering into his following all whom God had appointed to receive this enlightenment. Thus fortified with wisdom and the power of the Spirit, these chosen ones would be able to "climb the steep ascent of Heaven."

It was inconceivable that the Very Word of God should undergo failure and suffering on this earthly mission. He might seem to fail but it was only seeming. Doceticism was a necessary safe-guard in all the Gnostic systems.

If one will accept the theory that the flesh of Jesus was the flesh in which the Word was temporarily clothed, and will listen, not to what Jesus did say, but to what the Word made flesh would say, here in the Gospel of John is the best suggestion the author could make as to what those divine teachings would be. Here then is our answer to the question: Why was the Gospel of John written? It was written as a hand-book of Christianity adapted to the Gnostic pattern. There are no grounds to suspect any deliberate deception. The author is not trying to palm off a fabrication to take the place of the Synoptic Gospels. Everything is frank, open, above-board, and in good faith. They felt it necessary to "hellenize" Christianity. The Gospel of John is their attempt. We are under obligation to feel profound gratitude to that Gospel and its Gnostic author for preserving the memory and name of Jesus. We may admit they did this in the only way that seemed possible to them: by turning Jesus into a sort of figurehead for their theological ship, where he could adorn the ship and lend it a semblance of authenticity, but could say not a word as to its cargo or destination. So long as we discharge that debt of gratitude we are free to use the Gospel as we see fit. We are certain that in reading it we are not necessarily reading the sayings of Jesus, but only the sayings purported to have been uttered by the Word made flesh. But words made flesh are metaphysical concepts, and can communicate with us only through the kindly services of some prophetic ghost-writer. Therefore, what we are reading is nothing but the best guess some unknown ghost-writer could make of what the Word made flesh would say if he could speak English. Some of its passages have their own intrinsic beauty, especially those that sound "just like Jesus." There are a few such: "I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." And one that was spoken not by Jesus, but by Philip: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Convince us of God's reality; we will do the rest. For the sake of that single sentence we could forgive the entire Gospel of John.

What it amounts to then is that we can use the Gospel of John provided we are completely undeceived as to its alleged historicity; and with an understanding of is origin and purport: a piece of theological propaganda. It is a collection of observations in which we can find an occasional gem. These gems we can take out of their context and read and use and remember for their intrinsic truth and beauty.

If Jesus Had Written A Book

Carl Bihldorff

In the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to John we read: "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground." That is the only reference we have of Jesus' writing. We know he could read for the Scripture tells us that in his home town of Nazareth he took part in the synagogue service and read from "the book of the prophet Esaias." And since he could read we may be quite certain that he could write. But if he ever put any of his ideas on papyrus there is today no record of it.

Of course we have the Gospel stories of his life and work and teachings, and we ought to be eternally grateful to those who wrote them, and to those who preserved them for posterity. I must confess, however, that I still wish that Jesus had written a book.

Let me explain what I mean by saying frankly, I'm not satisfied with the Gospels. Oh, I'm thankful for them, and humanity would be much poorer had these wonderful records and literary treasures been lost. But the Gospels are only a fragmentary account of what Jesus thought and said.

Consider: it was from thirty to one hundred years after his crucifixion that the Gospels were written. Mark's is the closest, and perhaps the most authentic account: he got his information from Peter, the first disciple. But even there many years had intervened between the events and their recording. The other Gospels were written later, and, as we should expect, they show signs of human elaboration and imagination which are the natural fruits of time. It isn't the occasional lack of accuracy that disturbs me; it's the omission of something I know was central in Jesus' life.

If you want to know what Jesus thought about man's responsibility to man you will find the answer in the story of the Good Samaritan, in the parables of the sheep and the goats, Lazarus and the Rich Man, and many others. If you are seeking a Christian approach to problems in human relations you will not look in vain. Jesus' teachings about forgiveness and mercy, purity and love, are found in all the Gospels. And his ideas concerning God and Immortality are quite well reported. But when you look for light on the source of his spiritual power, of his radiant courage and faith, of his wisdom and deep human sympathy, you look almost in vain. Those who take seriously his saying: "The works that I do ye can do also, and greater works than these shall ye do" usually ask in despair—"But how can I?" To be sure the Bible offers some clues. Listen: "And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed"; or "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Again and again the Gospels refer to Jesus' use of prayer, meditation and solitude—forty days in the wilderness struggling with his soul, an evening in Gethsemane seeking the strength to face the cross with fortitude. Does it not appear that this was the well of living water to which he withdrew for refreshment, strength, and courage?

But will prayer always work this miracle? One man, who had attended church all his life, finally said to his minister: "Can you tell me why, after all these years, nothing vital and moving has ever happened to me?" There's nothing unusual about that question except that the man had the courage to ask it. Hasn't his experience been ours? At the Yale Divinity School where I did my training there is, under Marquand Chapel, a little sanctuary for private worship. Many times have I gone through its door seeking in the silence that power and grace which would enable me to achieve a richer, deeper spirit. Frequently I came away from those devotions quite as empty as I entered and, on those happy occasions when I became aware of the Divine Presence, the conflicts within my soul reconciled, and my being filled with power and purpose, I would go forth with quickened steps only to find the vision fade within a few hours.

I believe that must have been the experience of the disciples. They had seen in Jesus the transforming power of prayer; they had also witnessed its inadequacy in their own lives; and the contrast between his force and their failure moved them to say: "Lord, teach us to pray."

In answering them Jesus said, "When we pray, say, 'Our Father, which art in Heaven, . . .' " and so he gave us the Lord's Prayer. But wonderful as that prayer is, I do not believe that that was all he said to them. He who lived in an attitude of devotion and attunement could hardly summarize in thirty seconds—the time it takes to repeat that prayer—the content and technique of his prayer life. Something has been lost! To be sure, he also said in answering them: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But the Gospels do not adequately elaborate on this statement. The point I wish to make is that successful prayer is a science. That, perhaps, is a cold word to use in speaking of life's most moving, creative experience. What I mean is that some techniques, methods and approaches are more successful than others. Men did not harness atomic power by accident, or wishful thinking, or just by longing for it. They employed all the skills and techniques and knowledge available.

Wasn't it President Truman who, in announcing the atomic bomb, said: "We have harnessed the basic power of the universe"? I don't mean to be unduly critical, but I do know that that is not the Christian interpretation of the basic power of the universe. Jesus said the greatest power in life is love. I believe that. And the uniqueness of Jesus' revelation was that he harnessed that power, appropriated it, in a way that has never been surpassed. Even under the agony of the cross that power was with him, moving him to say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Such love was not the gift of accident or destiny. It was an achievement he wrought through prayer. And who among us, when we consider the glory and the wonder of his life, is not moved to say, "Lord, teach us to pray"?

But our appeal is nineteen centuries late. The disciples and the Gospel authors are gone. The record is incomplete, and Jesus didn't write a book. Does this mean then that the art of creative prayer has been lost? Not in the least! To be sure much of our Christianity has lost the radiance and joy and power which it revealed in its begin-

nings. Rufus Jones has written: "What I miss most in our present-day Christianity is the spirit of serenity, of gentleness, of simplicity, of tenderness and grace, that love which suffers long and is kind, that depth of power and sacrifice which were so marvelously in the life of Jesus." How then can we recover "The Lost Radiance of Christianity," as L. P. Jacks put it? If we are in earnest in our desire to use prayer creatively and effectively we must supplement the Gospel record with the witnessing experience of others. St. Francis and Meister Eckhart, St. Teresa and François de Sales, Brother Lawrence and Thomas Kelly, these and countless others who, having seen in the life of Christ the epitome of spiritual fulfillment, and longing to find his "peace which passeth understanding," have re-discovered those steps which Jesus must have followed in his own search for God.

Because Thomas Kelly was of our generation (he died in 1941 at the age of forty-eight), I shall draw upon his insights and discoveries. He, like Jesus, struggled long to find the peace and the power and the presence of God; and strangely, too, his ministry lasted but three years. Let us begin with these words he wrote after 1938. "Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home to itself. Yielding to these persuasions utterly and completely, is the beginning of true life." Ah, yes, we say, such intimations my soul has known in those rare yet holy moments of life when I have been at one with God. But these experiences have been so fleeting I've hardly dared to trust their witness. Listen again to Thomas Kelly: "The light shall fade, the will weaken, the humdrum return. Can we stay this fading? No. But the Eternal Inward Light does not die when ecstacy dies." If only I had had someone like Thomas Kelly to guide and encourage me in the early days of my soul's outreaching, how much richer my spiritual life and perception might now be, for he says, "if with the years, we are deadly in earnest in our dedication to God, we shall pass out of the first stages into maturer religious living." Here again these words whose edge has been dulled by their very familiarity: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." No threat of force there. No obtrusiveness. It is ours to decide whether or not we shall bid the Divine Presence welcome.

When, whether in the sanctuary of worship, the star-lit silences of night, or in moments of out-reaching gratitude, you feel God's presence, bid Him welcome. Stay your mind on Him; let your spirit be bowed in reverent adoration; deny room to those selfish lazy thoughts which clamor for hearing. All this requires a real effort of will, nor is it easy. However, one doesn't master a language or an art of a sudden. Scientists don't despair if their first tests fail. The Queen of England once heard Paderewski at a private recital, and then said to him: "Sir, you are a genius." "Perhaps," he answered, "but before that I was a drudge." Nor are there any short cuts in mastering spiritual techniques. Let us not forget that Jesus spent thirty years preparing for his ministry. But think of the victory! Intimate fellowship with God, His peace and His power. Is not this the pearl of great price?

Some of you will say, But this is a program for monks and cloistered saints. How can one accomplish the ordinary business of life if he becomes a contemplative mystic? St. Paul said, "Pray without ceasing," and I once reacted in a similar vein. But then I opened my eyes to the fruits of his vigorous life. Paul was no sheltered monk. Persecuted, stoned, ship-wrecked, imprisoned—these are the facts of a ministry which carried him from Jerusalem to Rome, and made Christianity a world, rather than a racial religion.

I have several times read of individuals who could write simultaneously with both hands on different subjects. Not all of us are so talented. But the witness of many has shown that the practice of the presence of God, a constant attunement to His will and spirit does not detract from, but actually helps men in performing their life's work.

Are you acquainted with this poem?

In the castle of my soul
Is a little postern gate,
Whereat when I enter,
I am in the presence of God,
In a moment, in the turning of a thought,
I am where God is.
This is a fact.

When I enter into God,
All life has meaning.
Without asking, I know;
My desires are even now fulfilled.
My fever is gone.
In the great quiet of God
My troubles are but pebbles on the road,
My joys are like the ever-lasting hills,
So it is when I step through the gate of prayer
From time into eternity.

You might judge from hearing this that the author was one of those sensitive souls, retiring and shy, who hid his light under a bushel. Far from it! He was Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the greatest social prophets and reformers our country has ever known. He found in prayer what Jesus found: the glory of God's presence; and he

found it because he attuned himself through discipline and devotion to the whisperings of the Almighty.

Well, now, what have we learned of Jesus' prayer life through those who pioneered the same road? First, he trusted his early intimations of God's reality and power. Second, he dedicated himself to the task of realizing in his own life the Will of God through the practice of His presence. Third, when the press of life drained the power he had drawn from God, he withdrew into a solitary place, and there refreshed his strength and faith and insight. Finally, he trusted God where he could not see—"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." This is a truth to which our spirits bear witness. Our task and challenge is to learn how to open our lives to the Divine Presence, that the wonder and the beauty and the glory seen in Jesus may be revealed in us also.

A MINORITY WE CRUSHED

Sidney S. Robins

(Reprinted by permission from the *Chapel Hill News Leader*, Chapel Hill, N. C.)

I recall having read, and I trust it is correct, that the legislature of the State of Virginia once came within two votes of favoring abolition of slavery in that State. The time was somewhere around 1830, and the writer went on to say that in 1835 Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, which made slavery enormously more profitable and ended the misgivings of the South. Here is an illustration of the "love of money" not only being "the root of all evil," but putting blinders on the conscience.

Probably most of us are familiar with Thomas Jefferson's famous remark on slavery: "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." Not quite so many will recall that Benjamin Franklin was the first president of the Society formed in Philadelphia for promoting the abolition of slavery. This is the group that got Liberia started. In the South they took the name of "Manumission" rather than "Abolition" Societies, because the last got to have special meanings and to be a fighting word. They were out to induce masters to free their own slaves, or to buy them up, and to colonize.

Few of us realize what an increase of free negroes there was in the South from the beginning to the Civil War. In 1790 we in North Carolina had 4,975; in 1830 we had 19,543; and in 1860 we had 30,463.

This means something, although the position of the "free negro" was not what the name suggests. He was an object of jealousy from the slaves. The owners regarded him as a criticism and kind of threat. Before 1835 he had the right to vote though he seldom exercised it. Our North Carolina Constitution of 1835 took away the right. After 1830 the Law said that in order to free a slave, the master or somebody had to post a bond of $1,000 for his good behavior until he left the state, and see to it that he did leave. With such a difficulty it seems extraordinary that the number of free negroes kept on growing as it did.

The Quakers of Guilford, Randolph, and Chatham Counties were the main spring of the North Carolina Manumission society which in 1825 had fifty-eight branches and a membership of 1,600. The first and last presidents of the organization happen to have been named Swaim, Moses and Benjamin respectively, both Randolph lawyers. The Swaims were not Quakers so far as I know. William Swaim, later conspicuous editor of the old *Greensboro Patriot*, and grandfather of O. Henry, is apparently the same W. S. who was secretary of the Manumission Society for three or four years after 1825. Equally prominent as office-holders, in numbers and influence, were the Mendenhall and Coffin tribes. The father of Governor Jonathan Worth was an active member. General Alexander Gray (I believe a relative of Gordan Gray), largest slave-owner in Randolph (he had 83) headed many committees and took a prominent part. All this means something.

The Manumission Society had a few hopeful years after 1825. But the question was becoming inflamed and sectional, and there was increasing pressure against agitators. William Swaim may have been the last well-known editor to agitate so boldly against slavery, and Benjamin Hedrick at Chapel Hill the last professor. The one died too soon, and the other lost his job. After the enactment of that 1830 law referred to, the organization felt strangled. Final death followed the Nat Turner Slave Rebellion in Virginia, which killed whites, and crystallized public opinion on the tough side.

Meanwhile those families which started the organization were drifting west by migration, most of them to Indiana or Ohio. The Swaims, still conscious of their North Carolina roots, as late as thirty years ago had, and perhaps still have, their family reunion center in Indiana. The same may be true of others. The Worths, Mendenhalls, Grays, and other families, stuck to the old North state enough to give it some conspicuous leaders; but some of them lost heavily in numbers. Many of the names that were on the rolls of the Manumission Society appear known to the State no more. Of course slavery was not

the only reason for that heavy migration of the times, but it was an important one.

It is of no use or sense to wish we had been able to keep a lot of the minority of that time who were conspicuous for intelligent conscience. Economic interest and inherited social pattern were strong enough to see to that. The challenge of today seems to be to see whether intelligent conscience has grown a bit stronger, and emotional resistance a bit weaker.

JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT

On the matter of Desegregation the *Christian Science Monitor* has carried through one of the most helpful bits of national service that American citizens of this generation have ever seen. The issue of March 10 contains a half-page that should be reprinted as a leaflet and scattered broadcast over the country, especially the Northern States. It should be made "compulsory reading" for every "Do-gooder" and high-minded reformer north of the Mason-Dixon Line, however pure his heart may be and taintless his motives. It might warn him that his want of tact and his ignorance of the touchiness of the task is causing all the defiance and hatred that has so far been in evidence.

The half page referred to bears the following title and sub-title: "Some Southerners Speak. To clarify the national thinking this newspaper asked some Southern leaders to comment on their region's state of mind and any specific American attitudes they feel are necessary in order to avoid violence and bring healing in a deteriorating situation following the Supreme Court desegregation order. Replies appear on this page."

There follow nine brief replies; two each from Tennessee and Virginia, one each from Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Of the writers, two are editors, two college presidents, one the governor of his state, one the president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, one a senator in Washington, one a member of the House of Representatives, and one the Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council. To read these replies is to feel your bosom swell with pride that American leaders are of such calibre and magnanimity. There is not a single passionate word. They are invariably reasonable, courteous and quiet. Any country that can boast such men is "safe for democracy." They are all agreed that the Supreme Court order is right, and should be obeyed. They also agree that, given time for Southern people to get used to the idea and to make certain very drastic and fundamental changes in long-established mores and habits of thinking, this obedience can be secured. They call attention to the fact that the Supreme Court order obviously contemplates a gradual and deliberate change, and they are grateful, for only such a change can hope to be permanent.

But most if not all the replies hit the very nub of the difficulty when they show that it is the extremists of both South and North that are doing most of the talking and organizing. There is a point that should hit us squarely between the eyes. As one of them says: "The great middle ground of responsible moderates must organize not only in the North, but especially in the South." Are we in that great middle ground of responsible moderates? Several of the replies contain the broad but gentle hint that most of their practical difficulties arise from the impatience of Northern uplifters, pressure groups, who by reckless words and acts do not hesitate to hurt local pride and stir up the hatred and defiance. For this there is no excuse.

Among the sad memories that still lurk in the dark corners of our minds, the saddest and ugliest is the carpet-bagger of ninety years ago. Are we witnessing the emergence of another form of carpet-baggery? Its motives may be wholly different, even noble; but its essential psychosis is the same: the determination to get our own axe sharpened no matter how many dents we put in the other fellow's axe. That must not happen. Think how nice it will be to realize, if desegregation should fail, that it is our own fault. Remember that an unbalanced virtue can be the most dangerous thing in the world; that one tauro-cephalic saint can do more harm than ten cloven-hoofed sinners. Virtues properly travel and work in pairs: Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. And judgment in the Old Testament means exactly what it means in our colloquialism, reasonableness, common sense. The best hope for the Desegregation Order lies in the hands of those immediately interested, which we are not. The least we can do is to keep out of it and give them a perfectly fair field. Be it therefore resolved that, as of the year 1956, this body shall pass no resolution whatsoever bearing upon the Supreme Court Order for Desegregation.

Beginning with the next issue, October, the back page of THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN will be given over to correspondence with our Readers. Your letters to the Editor will be welcome. They will be answered if possible, and printed with answer for the benefit of all interested.

The Discipline of Liberty

Charles C. Forman

In every century there is some single problem that stands out more than any other in its urgency. That problem presents itself with untiring persistency until men and women are forced to examine it in order to offer some solution for their time. In the sixteenth century the problem revolved about the definition of the church. What was the church, and what was its proper relationship to the papacy? What was the relationship of the church to the state? In many ways answers were given to those questions but, ultimately, the most far-reaching answer was found in the many aspects of the Protestant Reformation.

In the seventeenth century the great problem that confronted churchmen of all traditions was the manner in which the individual was related to the church. The issue in that century was met with two possible alternatives: reform within or dissent. The work of Blaise Pascal and other Jansenists provides an example of the response of French Catholics to the need for reform, while the whole history of the English church in the seventeenth century is the story of growing awareness of the impact of the problem of the responsibility of the individual and his relation to the church. Puritanism, Separatism, Nonconformity and the experiment of the Pilgrim Fathers illustrate the variety of the response to that problem.

In the eighteenth century men of intellectual stature and religious concern were attracted to a re-examination of the definitions of the nature of man. The whole question of man's nature led to a second question. What is the relationship of man to God? The inherent liberties of mankind were discussed, and the "self-evident truths" of the Declaration of Independence provide a handy index to the conclusions that men and women in America had reached in response to the question of their age. In New England the seemingly impregnable doctrine of Calvinism (which had flourished in the preceding century) that human nature was totally depraved—completely evil—was being called into question by her ablest thinkers.

Man continued to occupy the attention of the nineteenth century both in America and in Europe. The great literary tradition of rationalism that had come to full flower in Germany in the eighteenth century continued into the new century, but it was undergoing radical changes, changes which were felt not only in literature but in philosophy and religious sentiment as well. Rationalism was becoming on the one hand idealism, and on the other Romanticism. This transition was reflected in religious thought where it took the form of deep-set optimism. The problem of evil in human nature was answered with the assertion of the innate goodness of man which opened the way to the notion of moral perfectibility.

In our century the great problem that confronts us is the need for re-thinking the nature of liberty and the responsibilities that liberty imposes. How can the liberty which in differing ways and varying settings has actually been the issue of every century since the sixteenth be safeguarded? There are two things that need to be said in connection with the problem of liberty which confronts us all. The first is that the concept of man has undergone certain changes between the last century and the present century. The optimism that characterized the nineteenth century has been transformed into a mood of realism in the twentieth century. We have learned after two World Wars that liberty has many aspects and a multitude of implications of which we were once unaware. For example there is the problem of the individual who interprets his liberty in terms that deny the liberty of another. We are discovering that freedom is not merely a thing to be desired, but a fearful thing if it is not limited. Freedom of thought and of action has come to be equated with anarchy because men and women have failed to distinguish between liberty and a want of discipline.

The second thing that needs to be said is that the problem of liberty which confronts us has not only to do with fear but with a lack of concern for the safe-guarding of freedom. We have to a greater degree than most of us realize become weary of defending. We have a heritage of freedom of religion, of speech, and of self-determination, but unless that freedom carries with it a certain responsibility for its defense it is suddenly gone. Whether we take the example of political elections or town meeting or our parish meetings we can readily see that the right to these instruments of our freedom are worthless unless there is contained within that right the moral imperative to use these instruments.

The principle of freedom in matters of religion is not only a right but an obligation to think freely. Freedom of thought in religion is limited by another principle; viz., loyalty to truth, loyalty to the principle that all evidence is of importance. There is a mistaken notion—and it has its champions among liberal Christians—that liberty means the right to discard the old in favor of whatever is new. But truth has nothing

to do with age. There are ancient errors; there is also ancient truth.

This problem is especially acute in our own tradition of religious liberalism where authoritarianism has been displaced by the principle of freedom of thought and belief. Unitarianism has made basic the idea that a man is endowed with the ability to think and act freely—if he uses his God-given potential. We believe that absolutism in science, social theory, political thought or religion is bankrupt. It fails to adequately come to grips with change and growth. Dogmatism is hopelessly old-fashioned. As Dr. Harry Meserve has recently put it: "Dogmatism, wherever you find it, is indecent."

Now we are nowhere more aware of this unique Unitarian principle of freedom than when we are asked what it is that Unitarians believe. It is a very difficult thing to change the point of reference in religion from creed and dogma to principle. The ideal of freedom of thought and belief goes back very far in Unitarian history and it is the root of American Unitarianism. William Ellery Channing preached a sermon in 1830 which he called "Spiritual Freedom." He described that freedom under these headings: Freedom is a moral force; freedom is self-control; freedom is the enlargement of thought and affection; freedom is unrestrained action of our best power. Note the absence of any negative definitions which too often clutter the replies of Unitarians to inquiries into our beliefs. It was Channing who said: "I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions."

Now this liberty imposes upon all who claim it certain disciplines which are its price. The first discipline is to remember that the right to liberty must be won and preserved by effort. There are no bargains in life. Victory is never complete for all time. There are always those new battles of the spirit to be waged. As John Robinson, the Pilgrim pastor, said: "We must not come to a period in religion."

The second discipline has to do with freedom of thought, and is this: Freedom of thought is only valid when a man thinks. The principle of freedom of thought in a vacuum is worth absolutely nothing. There is a faulty notion abroad that Unitarianism stands for the idea that a man may believe anything—or need believe nothing. But the real principle is something else: it is that a man must believe what all evidence leads him to believe, what conscience dictates, what truth endorses, and what the whispered assurances of his own soul tell him is true.

The legitimate use of freedom is difficult and our Unitarian faith is the most exacting form of Christianity in existence. It demands a constant wrestling with the truth, winning new victories and searching for more light. There is no resting place, and like the manna given to the Israelites freedom is perishable in the extreme. All men have the God-given right to think and believe as they will. There is also the God-given responsibility to render an accounting sometime, somewhere, for those things which we choose to think or believe or do. Freedom is first and last a moral force—it is an exacting task-master, at least until we learn to say with St. Paul that "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

THE STUDENT UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The newly-formed Student Unitarian Christian Fellowship is composed of a dozen Unitarian students at the Harvard Divinity School, who are concerned to reach deeper understanding of Unitarian Christianity themselves, and to spread the knowledge and promote the interests of it in the School community. Its organization occurred shortly after a luncheon on October 24, 1955, at the Harvard Faculty Club with members of the Executive Committee of the Parent Fellowship. Though the present members are all Harvard students, it is hoped that Unitarians at other seminaries will join soon. The officers of the Student Fellowship are: John R. Purnell, Jr., Chairman; and Carl R. Scovel, Secretary. Charles Forman and Ralph Lazzaro of the Divinity School Faculty are advisors to the group.

At its first public activity the Student Fellowship conducted a service of worship to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the appointment of Henry Ware, Sr., to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity in Harvard College. Dr. Ware was a liberal Christian, and his appointment to this important position in 1805 was one of the major events in the history of Unitarian Christianity both at Harvard and in the nation. The anniversary service took place on December 13, in Divinity Hall Chapel. The preacher was the Rev. Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association.

During the remainder of the school year the Student Fellowship plans to sponsor a series of meetings, with speakers and opportunity for open discussion, on the general subject of Unitarian Christianity. The School in general and all Unitarian students in particular, will be invited to these meetings.

J. R. P., Jr.

PRAYER

Lord, we call upon thee by thy most august title: Alpha and Omega. For thou art First and Last; Beginning and End. In thee we find our origin, the beginning of life in all its wonder and mystery; from thee we learn our right ways of living, how to know thy truth, how to do thy will; with thee we discover our end, thy thought realized, thy purpose fulfilled. Thou art the first hope, and the daily guide, and the crowning success. Without thee we are but vagrants lost in the dark.

In thine infinite patience look upon thy children throughout this world. We are all seeking the single goal: the full realization of thy gift of life. But we disagree over the means and methods, and dispute which are the right ones. Teach us to cultivate deeper and more durable sympathies, Lord, no longer content with those that spring from the superficial similarities of race and class and worship and daily customs, but insistent for the sympathy that springs from the profound mystery of our common life and our universal powers of thought and self-consciousness and reverence and aspiration and our universal dependence on thee.

Open our eyes to see how much we have in common, and how strong are the bonds that might unite us into one vast family—the children of the Thought of God. Teach us to think more and trust more on the common hopes that unite us, and less on the disagreements that are of little consequence and should never be allowed to divide us.

Let thy blessing fortify this great adventure in human brotherhood on which we are all embarked. Make it strong with thy strength, and effective with thy wisdom, and triumphant with thy power. All men have their guides, O God; we thank thee for our guide and master, who came that we may have life and have it abundantly. As other hearts in distant places are thanking thee for their heroes and prophets, let it be our concern to seek a better and more mandatory discipleship unto him whom we call our Master, that we may grow in Christ from day to day, and learn his temper and disposition, his patience and magnanimity, his unwearied sympathy for broad mankind, and his impregnable trust in the human heart.

Lord, we cannot beseech thee to answer our prayer; for we know that the answer lies in our own power. Help us therefore to understand ourselves better; to know that our own hearts are thy best-beloved temples; that Something in us, not ourselves, resides with us as a permanent guest; that man's soul is God in man; that conscience is a modest legate sent from thy heaven to dwell in our little inner kingdoms, to keep us informed of thy truth, thy will, thy purposes of eternal good. We beseech thee only for grace to form the daily habit of consulting thy legate in our own hearts, and obeying his counsels. So grant that we shall find thy way, and do thy will, and know thy peace, and share thy victory. Thine be the glory, world without end: *Amen.*

SEVENTY YEARS AGO

From the *Boston Herald*, March 7, 1887.

The ministers of Boston are a gregarious set of beings, and this is especially the case with a good part of those who reside in Roxbury. Within two stones' throw of a center called Lewis Park, in that part of the City, there are ministers enough to convert every sinner in that quarter of the town if they should put forth all their efforts in this direction. The most prominent clergyman is Dr. Edward Everett Hale; just in his rear is Dr. John A. Hamilton; a little farther up the hill is the venerable Dr. A. C. Thompson; next to him is Rev. Julius H. Ward; across the way from his residence lives Rev. B. F. Hamilton; a little farther down on the same street is the home of Rev. Mr. Mitchell. Taking a turn into Millmont street, the first minister is Rev. Mr. Bellamy; a few doors farther lives Rev. Percy Browne; and just around the corner and opposite Fellowes' Athenæum, in a fine mansion, is the residence of Rev. James De Normandie. Going two streets south there is the residence of Rev. George S. Converse and, a little way from him, on the same street, is the home of his assistant, Rev. George S. Pine. A little farther up on Highland Street is the home of the well-known Ruggles Street pastor, Dr. R. G. Seymour.

How many more ministers may be domiciled within the same precincts is not known. Baptists, Unitarians, Episcopalians and Congregationalists are here living side by side as quietly as if the time had come when the lion and the lamb could lie down together. Dr. Thompson is the chairman of the dreadful prudential committee of the American Board; Dr. Hale is his antipodes in all that pertains to the Christian belief; and the other clergy are men who are under bishops or under nobody in particular; but there is never any disturbance in this serene neighborhood, and one would imagine that Baxter's "Saints' Rest" had been realized in earnest, and felt the Sabbath tranquillity that pervades the district.

Whether the place should be called the home of the saints cannot be said; but it is safe to say that thieves would find poor picking in this locality, and that the children are under the holy restraint of their elders.

It is a sort of Zion's Hill, but the profane people of this world call it by no better name than Roxbury Heights.

It is doubtful whether another locality in Boston, outside of Chestnut Street, has so many people of a kind, unless it be a doctors' neighborhood.

HERETIC, REBEL, THING TO FLOUT

There is a Greek word, *hairetis*, meaning one who chooses. The verb form is *hairetizo*, I choose, I select. Even among the Athenians, who were at least as far along as any civilized people of the time, in the appreciation of individuality, in respect for the basic individual rights and prerogatives, and in tolerance toward those who presumed to trust their own judgment, and make their own choice, and determine their own loyalties, this word *hairetis* carried a slight flavor of reproach. *Hairetis* was not the worst name you could call a man, but neither was it the best.

One of their cardinal virtues was *sophrosyne*—nothing too much, moderation, temperance, modesty, stick to the middle of the road, be ready with your concessions, agree with thine adversary quickly, for he may for a wonder be as wise and good a man as yourself. In like manner, the cardinal sin of the times was *hubris*, pride, self-esteem, conceit. It was a sin whereby you offended not only your fellow-mortal, but, what was far worse, you offended the gods, even angered them. For an occasion might arise, a victory perhaps, or the final success of some long-drawn effort like Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, or Solomon finally completing the Temple, or Ulysses by his craft at last capturing the city of Troy, when in exuberance of spirit you would forget yourself and say: My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth, thus claiming for yourself the credit that belongs to God, that would be an affront to God which he could hardly overlook. Thus the *hairetis*, because of the mere fact that he observed, thought, judged, and chose for himself, automatically put himself under suspicion of *hubris*, so that people looked at him askance and wondered.

Our English word heretic derives directly from this Greek *hairetis*, and bears exactly the same meaning: a man who has the effrontery to trust his own powers of observation, thought and judgment, and thus chooses his own line of conduct. In fact, our English word heretic connotes a great deal more down-right *hubris* than the Greek word *hairetis*, which only suggested the suspicion of *hubris*. With us, a heretic is a rebel, a thing to flout. He has no respect for prevalent opinions and beliefs just because they are prevalent. He will not conform to popular notions or generally accepted convictions unless his own judgment tells him to. He "comes from Missouri," and you must "show him" that these generally approved conventionalities in religion, politics, sociology, even in medicine and pedagogy are really authentic, solidly based and supported by undeniable facts before he will consent to respect them.

Even so his acquiescence will be reluctant, as though he hated to acquiesce. For the true heretic is a lonely man, and usually loves his loneliness. Tell the true heretic that you agree with him and he will look at you with a scowl of displeasure—as much as to say: You do? Well now, if anybody agrees with me I must be wrong. I must re-examine my position with care. Perhaps he has read the words of Jesus with a perfect understanding of their meaning: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Mankind is guided by one of two voices, either the voice of short-sighted expediency or the voice of far-sighted idealism. For the great majority of men, the vast masses of rank and file, run of the mill, docile, unimaginative, conforming, hand to mouth mankind for whom the present moment is virtually all there is to life the voice of immediate expediency is the only guide worth following. They fall into the old Quaker's definition of the wise man: he will adapt himself to circumstances and take what he can get.

For the few really thoughtful men who see our life as a chain of days, each day a link, and each link a resultant product of all preceding links and also a causative influence on all the links to come; and who see in each present policy or habit or action both the fruit of all former policies, habits and actions and also the seed destined to bear future policies, habits and actions, it is never enough to live in any such happy-go-lucky, hand to mouth fashion. If life proves to be an aimless, meandering, leaderless drift through the ages, it is man's own fault. If man will wake up to his responsibility and to his power and allow himself to believe that under the control of a great glimmering ideal shining in his own heart he can give this aimless life a definite aim, he can straighten out this meandering human history into a consistent direction and a definite advance, then he can transform the whole bewildering aspect of life, and make it an authentic Pilgrims' Progress to some distant but inevitable Beulah Land where joy and gladness shall abound, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

So when Jesus said: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," what he meant was that by winning the commendation of all men you have proved your own lapse into the short-sighted expediency and opportunism of the great masses. You have no idealism, but only a ready adaptability and acquiescence to things as they are. You are not a help to God, only a drag. Woe unto you.

Whereupon, at this point, it becomes a happy duty to confess that this whole cluster of thoughts results from reading a new book fresh from the pen of Dr. Henry Hallam Saunderson: "The Way Called Heresy," published by the Starr King Press. It has been a rewarding experience.

Some books can be read only through a mandatory sense of duty. You think to yourself: His style is far too pompous for my taste; I don't like the patient condescending way he tells me things, as though I were a happy little moron; his pride of intellect is repellent; about a third of the book is incoherent; another third is just plain wrong; and the remaining third tells me things that I already knew. But the book has got to be read; so here goes. Pike's Peak or bust.

Dr. Saunderson has a more fortunate way of writing. He unconsciously establishes a rapport with his reader which is intimate, sympathetic, and most agreeable. You and your author are having a long, uninterrupted and perfectly frank discussion. You learn new ideas and points of view from him, but always with gratitude and never with jealousy or resentment. When you find your own notions corroborated by him you feel a little thrill of elation. Sometimes you want to interrupt him with an eager suggestion. Sometimes you come to a point of disagreement and want to stop right there and thrash it out with him before you go another step.

The title may mislead you to expect a labored, philosophical analysis of heresy in itself; what it is; what it can do to a people's culture; what right, and how much right, the ordinary duffer has to the privilege of being a heretic, and doing his experiencing, observing, appraising, choosing and deciding by and for himself. But that is not at all the purport of the book. The author assumes that you know what heresy is; and that here in America, the heretic's heaven, where individuality and its inalienable right is not only recognized but encouraged and protected, and where the privilege of private judgment is not only countenanced but urged upon one and all, it is hardly necessary to embark upon any lengthy dissertation on the comparative merits of conformity and heresy.

The book approaches its task in quite a different fashion. It is an unbroken consequential survey of our Christian religion in its history; beginning with Moses, the first prophet, down to Jesus, the greatest prophet; then on into the Christian era: Paul; the theologians and politicians; Marcion, and the attempt to shake off all Jewish elements; Arius, and the attempt to preserve the humanity of Christ; the Holy Catholic Church and its creeds; the Council of Nicæa, and the split into Greek and Roman Christianity; the missionary labors; the Inquisition; the Revival of Learning; Columbus; Luther; the Bible given to the people in their own tongues; the Humanists, Socinians, Arminians, Remonstrants, and Puritans; New England and the Theocracy; the dignity of Human Nature—and so on right down to the present day.

To make such a survey was an ambitious task, but it has been done with care and fidelity. Each event in the story is not only narrated in its proper time-sequence, but it is tinted with its contextual significance to give us both the event and its deeper meaning. Thus we have a panorama in color, full of coherence and vivacity. By the time the end of the book is reached we find that we have made at least three discoveries.

First: every prophet from Moses to Emerson has been a prophet because he was brave enough to be a heretic; trust his own spiritual intuition; proclaim the findings of his own idealism and conscience; speak forth the Word of the Lord as it has been communicated to his own private understanding, and laid as a burden of the Lord on his heart.

Second: "The Way Called Heresy" is not some fanciful theoretical course of faith and life that Christianity *ought to have* taken, it is the course that Christianity *has* taken. For at every critical point in the journey, every fork or cross-roads or by-path Christian sojourners have found some valiant prophet posted by the wayside urging the pilgrims to take the right fork, the true turn, the real path though it were but a seldom-used track. There always have been such guides, from Joshua son of Nun and Elijah the Tishbite to Stephen the Martyr, Francis of Assisi, John Wyclif, Father George Tyrrell and hundreds more. Not all Christians have heeded these directors of traffic, but enough to constitute a saving element of spiritual integrity in the Christian blood-stream.

Third: If the Priest, champion of conformity, asking nothing but docile obedience, had had his way and been sole supervisor of man's religious interests there would now be little left of our Christianity worthy of the name. But because the Priest has always had an irrepressible rival in the Prophet, speaking for God, champion of the religion of the Spirit, turning his back on forms and rites, and urging people to find God's presence in their own hearts, and listen to God's will in their own ideals and aspirations, we are assured of a Christianity that will be what any true religion must be—the first-hand traffic between the private soul and its God. Where there is no vision the people perish. There is no substitute for the prophet. He is welcome to all the heresy he needs to maintain the purity of his vision. And, thank Heaven, the line is still unbroken. In our own times and language and vesture we have these dedicated spirits whose first concern is

> Not to scatter bread and gold,
> Goods and raiment bought and sold;
> But to hold fast his simple sense,
> And speak the speech of innocence,
> And with hand and body and blood,
> To make his bosom-counsel good.
> He that feeds men serveth few:
> He serves all who dares be true.

"Now I saw in my dream that by this time the Pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground, and entering in the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant; they solaced themselves there for a while. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth. In this country the sun shineth night and day; here they were within sight of the City they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof, for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of Heaven."

At any time now the Summoning Angel will call here for one we know and love, who has been waiting for some time. The Angel will use neither earthly citation nor title of honor, but his name only:

MARION FRANKLIN HAM,

and the answer will come quietly, "Ready."

This is probably the last word we shall hear from him:

THE ABIDING PRESENCE

My Heavenly Father, you have been with me
  Since I first saw the light of life at birth;
Shaping with patient love my destiny,
  Teaching me how to live my life on earth.

In joy or sorrow, stormy days or fair,
  In pain or pleasure, still my faithful friend;
Easing the burdens that I could not bear,
  Abiding with me to the journey's end.

And now, as twilight fades into the night
  And darkness calls me to the unknown deep,
I see your glory in the fading light
  And feel you with me as I fall asleep.